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SHULTZ VISIT TO INDONESIA PROMPTS 123 LAWMAKERS TO PRESS ON EAST TIMOR TRAGEDY

WASHINGTON--A bipartisan group of 123 House Members urged Secretary of State George P. Shultz to use his visit to Indonesia this week to express American concern over the tragedy of East Timor.

An estimated 100,000 East Timorese have died since the 1975 Indonesian invasion of the largely Roman Catholic island territory and former Portuguese colony near Australia. Last August Indonesia began a military operation against East Timorese resistance that reportedly has had devastating consequences for many of the islanders.

"We cannot overlook the situation in East Timor where, as in Afghanistan, a people are living under a military regime imposed by force, in violation of international law," the lawmakers told Shultz in a letter.

The House members quoted Monsignor Carlos Ximenes Belo, head of the East Timor Church, who claimed that many Timorese are beset by "sickness, hunger, lack of liberty and persecution" in the wake of the new military offensive.

The lawmakers also expressed concern for the East Timor church which reportedly has been subject to harassment.

The letter specifically urged Shultz to press for increased and unrestricted access to East Timor by the International Red Cross and other humanitarian relief organizations, journalists, and other independent observers.

"We hope that you will take advantage of your trip to Indonesia to begin a diologue with the Indonesians on constructive initiatives that could lead to an equitable settlement of the conflict in East Timor," the House members said.

"The U.S. should not waste another opportunity to press for an end to the causes of the persecution and brutality in East Timor," said Rep. Tony P. Hall (D-Ohio), who drafted the letter.

Hall is the author of a section in the foreign aid bill urging the U.S. to help resolve the difficulties in East Timor. Hall has frequently criticized the State Department for ignoring the problems.

"The plight of the East Timorese is very much the responsibility of the U.S. as long as we are supplying Indonesia the very arms which are being used to suppress their rights," Hall said.

At least 100,000 out of a population of less than 700,000 have died in the territory from famine, disease, and war as a direct effect of the 1975 invasion and subsequent Indonesian military operations.

-more-

ADD ONE
EAST TIMOR

July 6, 1984

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are distressed over the continuing tragedy in East Timor, the largely Roman Catholic territory which was invaded by Indonesia in 1975. Since that time, by most credible accounts, more than 100,000 East Timorese have perished from the combined effects of the Indonesian occupation.

Recent reports indicate that the death and suffering in the former Portuguese colony are continuing. We believe that it is of critical importance that the plight of the people of East Timor be accorded serious attention in the meetings that you will conduct with the Indonesian leadership on the occasion of your visit to Indonesia, the first by an American Secretary of State since the 1975 invasion.

We are keenly aware of the importance of Indonesia and the need to maintain good relations between our two countries. Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the situation in East Timor where, as in Afghanistan, a people are living under a military regime imposed by force, in violation of international law.

Information reaching us this year from a variety of church and refugee sources suggests that the Indonesian offensive begun last summer has continued and has been accompanied by atrocities against the Timorese population. For example, a letter dated February 18, 1984, from the head of the Catholic Church in East Timor, Monsignor Carlos Ximenes Belo, to his predecessor, Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopes, described activities in some parts of the territory that are similar to the forced march of tens of thousands of Timorese males by the Indonesian military in 1981 that caused great loss of life. Monsignor Belo also claimed that the Timorese people are beset by "sickness, hunger, lack of liberty and persecution." The well-regarded clergyman stated that "the Church is being persecuted and accused," with the residence of Salesian priests in one center being "savagely searched" by elite Indonesian troops. Other church accounts in recent months have spoken of large-scale aerial bombardments of villages and still others of massacres.

Additional details are virtually impossible to obtain, for the Indonesian military continues to seal off East Timor from contact with independent journalists and international church and human rights groups. It has been a source of frustration to many international observers over the years that it has been so hard to get the facts about East Timor.

The overall picture that emerges is very disconcerting. Progress toward unrestricted, normalized access to East Timor has been negligible. Congressional concern in this regard prompted the House to adopt an East Timor amendment to H.R. 5119, the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1984. This amendment, now Section 914 of the foreign aid authorization bill, expresses the sense of Congress that the President should take all appropriate measures to encourage the Indonesians to allow increased access to East Timor by international relief agencies, international journalists, and international human rights organizations.

To help implement the concern expressed by the House in Section 914, we respectfully request that you raise these issues with the Indonesian Government during your visit to Jakarta. In particular, we would urge you to request that the International Red Cross be allowed increased access to East Timor. We are mindful of the disastrous famine and suffering that occurred between 1978 and 1980 when such international agencies at least were permitted limited visitations. We also would request that you raise the issue of the church's right to exist in East Timor free of persecution and harassment.

Finally, we would note that Section 914 calls upon the Administration to work with our concerned allies and the appropriate international organizations "to develop policies to end the ongoing human suffering in East Timor." We hope that you will take advantage of your trip to Indonesia to begin a dialogue with the Indonesians on constructive initiatives that could lead to an equitable settlement of the conflict in East Timor. Positive developments on the humanitarian issues we have raised could improve the prospects for a resolution of the causes of the human misery East Timor has experienced for nearly nine years. We urge you to make East Timor an important part of your agenda with the Government of Indonesia.

-more-

ADD TWO
EAST TIMOR

Morris K. Udall (D-Ariz.)
Jim Bates (D-Calif.)
Anthony C. Beilenson (D-Calif.)
Howard L. Berman (D-Calif.)
Douglas H. Bosco (D-Calif.)
Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.)
George E. Brown, Jr. (D-Calif.)
Sala Burton (D-Calif.)
Tony Coelho (D-Calif.)
Ronald V. Dellums (D-Calif.)
Julian C. Dixon (D-Calif.)
Mervyn M. Dymally (D-Calif.)
Don Edwards (D-Calif.)
Vic Fazio (D-Calif.)
Augustus F. Hawkins (D-Calif.)
Tom Lantos (D-Calif.)
Richard H. Lehman (D-Calif.)
Mel Levine (D-Calif.)
Matthew G. Martinez (D-Calif.)
Robert T. Matsui (D-Calif.)
George Miller (D-Calif.)
Norman Y. Mineta (D-Calif.)
Leon E. Panetta (D-Calif.)
Jerry M. Patterson (D-Calif.)
Fortney H. Stark (D-Calif.)
Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.)
Ray Kogovsek (D-Colo.)
Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.)
Timothy E. Wirth (D-Colo.)
Sam Gejdenson (D-Conn.)
Barbara B. Kennelly (D-Conn.)
Stewart B. McKinney (R-Conn.)
Bruce A. Morrison (D-Conn.)
William R. Ratchford (D-Conn.)
Thomas R. Carper (D-Del.)
Walter E. Fauntroy (D-D.C.)
William Lehman (D-Fla.)
Claude Pepper (D-Fla.)
Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.)
Lane Evans (D-Ill.)
Charles A. Hayes (D-Ill.)
John Edward Porter (R-Ill.)
Gus Savage (D-Ill.)
Paul Simon (D-Ill.)
Katie Hall (D-Ind.)
Berkley Bedell (D-Iowa)
Tom Harkin (D-Iowa)
Dan Glickman (D-Kans.)
Michael D. Barnes (D-Md.)
Roy Dyson (D-Md.)
Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.)
Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.)
Parren J. Mitchell (D-Md.)
Brian J. Donnelly (D-Mass.)
Barney Frank (D-Mass.)
Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.)
Nicholas Mavroules (D-Mass.)
Joe Moakley (D-Mass.)
James M. Shannon (D-Mass.)
Gerry E. Studds (D-Mass.)
David E. Bonior (D-Mich.)
John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.)
Dennis M. Hertel (D-Mich.)
Dale E. Kildee (D-Mich.)
Sander M. Levin (D-Mich.)
Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.)
James L. Oberstar (D-Minn.)
Martin Olav Sabo (D-Minn.)
Gerry Sikorski (D-Minn.)
Alan Wheat (D-Mo.)
Douglas K. Bereuter (R-Nebr.)
Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.)
James J. Howard (D-N.J.)
William J. Hughes (D-N.J.)
Peter W. Rodino, Jr. (D-N.J.)
Robert A. Roe (D-N.J.)
Christopher H. Smith (R-N.J.)
Robert G. Torricelli (D-N.J.)
Bill Richardson (D-N.Mex.)
Gary L. Ackerman (D-N.Y.)
Joseph P. Addabbo (D-N.Y.)
Thomas J. Downey (D-N.Y.)
Robert Garcia (D-N.Y.)
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Bill Green (R-N.Y.)
Matthew F. McHugh (D-N.Y.)
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Richard L. Ottinger (D-N.Y.)
Major R. Owens (D-N.Y.)
James H. Scheuer (D-N.Y.)
Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.)
Edolphus Towns (D-N.Y.)
Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.)
Stephen L. Neal (D-N.C.)
Dennis E. Eckart (D-Ohio)
Edward F. Feighan (D-Ohio)
Tony P. Hall (D-Ohio)
Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)
Thomas A. Luken (D-Ohio)
Mary Rose Oakar (D-Ohio)
Donald J. Pease (D-Ohio)
John F. Seiberling (D-Ohio)
Louis Stokes (D-Ohio)
Les AuCoin (D-Oreg.)
James Weaver (D-Oreg.)
Ron Wyden (D-Oreg.)
Robert A. Borski (D-Pa.)
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Bob Edgar (D-Pa.)
Thomas M. Foglietta (D-Pa.)
William H. Gray, III (D-Pa.)
Peter H. Kostmayer (D-Pa.)
Austin J. Murphy (D-Pa.)
Doug Walgren (D-Pa.)
Fernand J. St Germain (D-R.I.)
Claudine Schneider (R-R.I.)
Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.Dak.)
Mickey Leland (D-Tex.)
Rod Chandler (R-Wash.)
Mike Lowry (D-Wash.)
Al Swift (D-Wash.)
Robert W. Kastenmeier (D-Wis.)
Jim Moody (D-Wis.)

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